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*In a letter from W. Dornford
Leicester Inn.*

THE
MOTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES
OF THE
PRESENT WAR
IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

[Price 1s..6d.]

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(From the)

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MOTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES
OF THE
PRESENT WAR
IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

————— “ May no such storm
“ Fall on our times, where ruin must reform.”
COOPER’S HILL, BY SIR JOHN DENHAM.

L O N D O N:
Printed for J. PRIDDEN, No. 100, Fleet-street.
M,DCC,XCIII.

THE

MOTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF THE

PRESENT WAR

IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.



"I say no such thing."
"Tell us one thing, where you are going."
Governor's Hall, 10/10/10

246

LONDON:

Printed by J. BRIDGES, No. 10, Fleet Street.
M.DCCCXIII.

THE MOTIVES, &c.

IN a free country, where the people claim the privilege of delivering their opinion of the measures adopted by the administrators of their government without restraint, it is natural, when a war is either actually engaged in, or only in agitation, that they should indulge that privilege in an extraordinary degree; that they should weigh the objects of contention in the balance of what they presume to be the national interest, and proportion the degree of their censure or applause as the scale, not always of reason, but too frequently of personal and temporary convenience, apparently preponderates.

The attention of the public has certainly never been more generally attracted than by the peculiar circumstances attending the present war with France. The expediency of the measure has been debated with unusual warmth in our senate. The conduct of his Majesty's ministers has been alternately extolled and condemned. Specious have been opposed to solid arguments; and, although the general voice of the nation has approved their exertions, the vanquished party of opposition, reduced as it is by the desertion of many of its most respectable adherents, still returns with confidence to the field of combat; whilst those, who are immediately entrusted with the affairs of government, conscious of the integrity of their intentions, meet with unprecedented firmness the invectives of their antagonists, and do not disdain to profit from the truths which occasionally roll down with the torrent of their eloquence.

At

At so important a crisis, when the most distinguished talents, of which this or perhaps any other nation can boast, are employed in the defence or reprobation of the measures, which it has been thought expedient to adopt at the present juncture for the welfare of the country, it may wear the appearance of presumption, in an obscure individual, to obtrude his opinion on the public; but I venture, from a firm conviction that those measures are entitled to our confidence, and am willing to perform the part of a good citizen, by contributing to the utmost of my power to support them.

To enter at large into a discussion of the causes, which produced the revolution in France, a revolution, which, like a tremendous earthquake, has shaken that unhappy country to its center, thrown down every civil and religious institution, burst the bonds of society asunder, hurled the monarch from his throne, and destroyed the very altars sacred to the
Deity;

Deity; which, in short, has removed the most distant appearance of order, and left a dreadful mass of ruin, still convulsed and agitated by intestine tumult, would be to repeat not only from the journals of the day, but from a multitude of volumes, which have been already written on the subject, the history of transactions, at the very mention of which humanity recoils, and which we naturally wish to blot from our memory for ever.

To perform the task I have undertaken, it is only necessary to consider the circumstances as they actually exist, to place the principles maintained by the prevailing faction in France in their proper point of view, and seriously to examine the measures adopted by our government to counteract their fatal tendency.

It is universally acknowledged to be the duty of those, who are appointed to guide the helm of the state, to embrace every opportunity of promoting its welfare, to endeavour to foresee,

see, as far as human wisdom will permit, probable events, to judge in what degree they are likely to affect its interests, to encourage such as appear to have a beneficial tendency, and prevent the accomplishment of those which threaten it with danger. This duty appears never to have been fulfilled with more fidelity, or with greater zeal, than at the present period; a period, which, although the alarm has now happily subsided, has certainly been pregnant with the most serious evils that could possibly befall us; when anarchy approached with prodigious strides, and a spirit of rebellion against *every* form of government, has been widely and industriously diffused, through innumerable channels, under the specious appearance of a philosophical disquisition, of wild and impracticable theories; when the meanest artifices have been, and I fear are still, insidiously employed, to seduce the ignorant and unwary from their allegiance to an amiable monarch and a well-constituted government, and dark designs have

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threatened

threatened to invade our domestic tranquillity and happiness.

When the sun of liberty first appeared to shine in France, and shed its mild and enlivening beams on a people, which had groaned for ages in the chains of slavery, and the blessings we ourselves enjoy promised to diffuse their influence over that extensive country, we rejoiced as men, as philosophers, and Christians. We vainly hoped that the bonds of despotism, which, like a rigorous frost, had contracted, and rendered torpid, the minds of so many millions of inhabitants of a country, favoured by every gift that nature can bestow, would be dissolved; that the mists of prejudice and national enmity would be dispersed; and that, as mankind became more enlightened, it would be found to be their common interest to perpetuate the advantages of peace. We admitted an excuse for a people, wanton and licentious in the enjoyment of their newly-acquired freedom; and even good men inclined, too much perhaps,

perhaps, to palliate their crimes. History reminded us, that the Reformation, to which the protestant part of Europe is indebted for its religious liberty, gave birth to a host of extravagant fanatics, who trampled for a time on every divine and human obligation ; we knew that the fertilizing waters of the Nile are productive of noxious vapours, and that the same shower, which nurtures the most wholesome vegetables, and decorates the soil with flowers, quickens the growth of weeds, which frequently prevent their coming to maturity.

So astonishing an event as the revolution in France, the effects of which must necessarily have been felt in every quarter of the world, could not fail to alarm us as a neighbouring state in an extraordinary degree. We trembled with the shock, which plunged so great a nation into anarchy, and watched with a dread anxiety on the brink of the fatal precipice, expecting the convulsion to subside. When we saw the faction, which had produced the

awful chaos, triumphing amidst the spoil, and endeavouring to spread the havoc, a sense of our own danger naturally induced us to look to the executive power of our country for protection. Our hope was not in vain. The wise precaution of our government to prevent the contagion of the pernicious principles, which threatened to involve this happy island in misery and ruin, claimed our confidence, our warmest approbation, and our gratitude. The alarm, naturally raised in the breast of every honest Briton, jealous of the enjoyment of his rights, and roused to a sense of his hazardous situation, was attended by the best effects. The love we bear our envied constitution, the veneration in which we hold our mild religion, and an attachment to our unrivalled domestic comforts, wakened all our feelings into action, and confirmed our resolution to unite in their support. For this purpose, the most respectable members of society, not only in the metropolis, but in the parochial districts of the most distant quarters of the kingdom, where an equal degree of

zealous

zealous and disinterested patriotism, and loyalty to a gracious sovereign, pervaded every rank of people, and the same causes for alarm produced the same necessity for caution, associated to protect their country ; to form a phalanx against its internal enemies ; for, such, alas, there are ! and to guard against approaching evils by enforcing the laws against sedition, removing the poison from the lips of the unwary by checking the propagation of destructive principles, and adopting every expedient and constitutional method to strengthen the bulwark of our freedom. Thus we were secured from the impending danger ; but, lulled by the idea of our safety, we slumbered not. We continued to survey, not in a state of lethargy and indifference, but with increasing horror, the dæmons of ambition, revenge, and discord, furiously brandishing their destructive weapons. We marked the climax of the barbarity of a fallen and abandoned nation, until the murder of their innocent sovereign stamped indelible disgrace upon the name of France. Had the
 mis-

mischief been confined within the borders of
 that distracted country, however justifiable
 Great Britain might have been for endeavour-
 ing to reconcile contending parties, and through
 her mediation to establish a permanent consti-
 tution to ensure the peace of Europe, it was
 certainly the intention of the government of
 this country, as declared by the authority of
 the throne itself, to "observe a strict neutrality,
 "and uniformly to abstain from any inter-
 "ference in the internal affairs of France."
 The characteristic follies of the French might
 have excited our ridicule, and their atrocious
 cruelties have provoked our just abhorrence;
 but the sword would have still remained un-
 sheathed. We had formed no alliance with the
 powers at war with them, which obliged us
 to support their measures. No minister from
 Great Britain had attended the convention at
 Pilnitz, nor did we ever, before the war, how-
 ever our inclinations might have led us indi-
 vidualy to wish success to the Austrian and
 3 Prussian

Prussian armies, countenance their conduct by any public act.

We knew too well, and set too high a value on the superior advantages resulting from our foreign commerce, the encouragement of our internal manufactures, the expediency of an æconomical attention to the concerns of finance, and the increase of our public revenue, to strengthen the credit of our funds and reduce the national debt, to hazard an expensive war without the pressing call of dire necessity.—Contented with our own, it was not our wish to prescribe a form of government to others. As volatile and capricious in the choice of their constitution as in their manners, the French might have changed their system of government as often as the varying fashions of their fantastic dresses. But, artful and ambitious in their public as frivolous and contemptible in their private conduct, not contented with the prevalence of their language and degenerated manners, they have arrogated to them-

themselves the right of giving laws to Europe, and have presumed to insist on the adoption of principles, or, to speak with greater accuracy, a dereliction of all principles, in the government of every other country, in conformity with their own.

In open defiance of the law of nations, the faith of treaties, and the temperate conduct of neutral powers, the French have dared not only to trespass in the most wanton manner beyond the boundaries of reason and justice, but to break down every barrier established by society, to prevent the encroachment of disorder. The triumphs, which attended their armies, when hostilities commenced, and the pernicious principles, which they even yet continue openly to avow in the national convention, struck at our existence as an independent nation, and threatened destruction to every comfort we enjoy. The first principle of nature, therefore, self-preservation, loudly called
for

for immediate and vigorous exertions to avert the blow.

To be an advocate for war in general, however the prospect of conquest and honour may gratify the ambition and the pride of soldiers, is certainly very repugnant to the feelings of humanity. If its calamities are not sufficiently depicted in the page of history to make us shudder at the approach of so great an evil, the deep traces of its ravages are still too visible, even in the most cultivated countries, not to make us sincerely deplore its causes, however necessary, and earnestly wish that enmities might cease, and the sword be sheathed for ever. If we weigh the advantages resulting even from an ignominious peace with those of a successful war, we know that the former will preponderate; but, notwithstanding this, it is certainly possible that instances may occur, where peace with all its inestimable blessings might expose a nation to more remote perhaps, but more tremendous evils.

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A peace

A peace without security for its permanence, which only gives breath to an enemy to increase his strength, or grants a truce, the interval of which may be employed in making preparations for more effective war, is preferring the greater evil to the lesser. It is suffering a wound to heal upon the surface, whilst the real disorder spreads beneath, and endangers the life of the patient, which a seasonable, although perhaps a painful operation might have effectually saved.

Had it been possible for the ministers of this country to have averted the calamities to be apprehended from a war; could security have been given to us for the future peace of Europe, for the safety of ourselves, and our allies from open invasion, and from insidious attacks on our internal peace, we are satisfied that they would have neglected no justifiable means to accomplish so desirable an object. The declarations, made by the members of administration in both houses of parliament to this effect,

effect, are sufficient proofs of their pacific intentions ; and, however the measures adopted to promote such a negociation, as became the dignity of the British government, may have been cavilled at, and reprobated by their antagonists, posterity will echo the voice of the majority of their contemporary countrymen, and attribute the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings transmitted to them, confirmed, strengthened, and increased, to their wise and seasonable precautions in the moment of impending danger.

It has been repeatedly asserted that the existing government of a country, whatever that may be, is the power with which every other nation is bound to treat, and that all the objects, which are said to have been the grounds of the present war of England with France, might easily have been accomplished, if this country had condescended to negotiate with the executive council of France, which was as much entitled to receive a minister of Great Britain

as the empire of Morocco, or the state of Algiers. In both these instances, however, notwithstanding the change of persons, whether by violent or any other means, with which we can have no concern, the government itself remains, and the new Emperor or Dey continues to be the organ of his respective state; whereas in France, so long as the present disorders prevail, with whom are we to treat? The convention itself, when the war commenced, had not decided what constitution was most consonant with the wishes of the people, or rather with their own individual interests. The ministers who report to-day, are denounced to-morrow. Their generals are on one day honoured with the civic crown, and on another surrendered at their bar, and the instructions given to a person authorized to treat with one executive council might arrive when it exists no more. When we reflect for a moment on the perpetual changes, which have taken place in their boasted systems, and the infamy of their most distinguished characters, the idea of the possibility of

an effective negociation vanishes. We have seen the prevailing party of the first assembly driven into exile, and those, who succeeded them, seeking refuge in the same hospitable asylum, which received the objects of their vengeance. Their boasted heroes of the morning have before night become the objects of their fury, and the victorious citizen Dumourier himself proscribed. What reliance can be placed on their most solemn declarations? What have they sworn, that they have not violated? Their protestation of renouncing conquest was followed by the decree of an offensive war, and the penetration of their armies into all the adjacent countries. In a solemn decree of one assembly they invested the amiable and unfortunate Louis with the titles of, *Restorer of Liberty, and the Father of his People*, and decorated him with the most splendid ensigns of royalty; in another they spoiled him of his honours, branded him with infamy, doomed him to cruel imprisonment, and afterwards to an ignominious

ignominious death. With uplifted hands to heaven they swore to protect the nation, the law, and the king; and embued those guilty hands in their monarch's blood. How then could Great Britain credit their professions, or be justified in concluding a treaty with one faction, which another might annul? How negotiate with a nation of assassins? So long as even the shadow of a government existed, and M. Chauvelin was accredited by that government to negotiate with ours, no measure was neglected, which had the most distant tendency to avert the storm which had so long been gathering. Even after the king was deposed, the minister from France was suffered to reside in London at the very time, when there was every reason to suspect, that seditious meetings were clandestinely holden at his house, and notorious emissaries encouraged, who were plotting the destruction of the country. The ambassador from England continued to reside at Paris, till the king, to whom he was solely accredited, was

was deprived of his regal function; nor was it till after the horrid massacres of the 10th of August, that the government recalled him. That fatal day degraded the French beneath the rank of men. From that period they ceased to be entitled to the respect, which, as a foreign nation, they might otherwise have claimed with justice. But the last and blackest deed was yet to complete the measure of their guilt. The murder of their king was an act, which naturally excluded M. Chauvelin from having any farther official communication with our government. To have acknowledged a minister, accredited by an assembly guilty of so base a crime, would have been to conceal our abhorrence of their conduct. But, notwithstanding that this execrable deed was not only publicly, but privately, lamented by every individual in the nation, it was not made a pretence for war. A door was yet left open, and opportunities afforded for explanation, and satisfaction for the national insults we had experienced,

to

to prevent an open rupture. The minister was still accessible in London, and Lord Auckland permitted to receive any proposals which the artful Damourier might be inclined to make to him as the channel of communication at the Hague. Our suspense however was not of long duration. France, conscious of her guilt, invented frivolous, and even false pretences for the commencement of hostilities. The prohibition of the exportation of corn, and of the circulation of their assignats in this country, the alien bill, the increase of our armament, and other measures, which were thought expedient, and which, by the law of nations, we had an undoubted right to adopt for our own security, were alleged as the grounds of an embargo being laid on our shipping, and soon afterwards of a public declaration of war, an act, which cast the fatal dye, and put the general peace of Europe, and the fate of nations, to the issue of the sword.

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General peace of Europe, and the fate of na-

...and a group has **D** will **W** said to **that**

that

that every circumstance since the commencement of hostilities has concurred to justify.

It is acknowledged to be "the duty of every member of the commonwealth of Europe to support the established system of the balance, and distribution of power, among the independent sovereignties, which actually subsist, and to prevent the aggrandizement of any state, and especially the most powerful at the expence of any other." It was the policy of our ancestors so early as in the days of queen Elizabeth, when those great statesmen the lords Burleigh, Cecil, and Walsingham, saw the necessity of separating the Netherlands from Spain, although the extensive empire of France formed a barrier between them, and the family compact of the house of Bourbon did not then exist. One of the most grievous charges against Charles the Second, was his having betrayed our interests in Holland, by swerving from this ancient policy. The history of the reigns of king William and queen Ann, the latter

latter of which was so much distinguished by the victories of Marlborough, received its lustre from an adherence to the same established system, which has been faithfully observed by our three succeeding monarchs, and has contributed in a great degree to our present national splendor.

That France has encroached upon this system, to a very alarming degree, cannot be contradicted. Little penetration is necessary to see through the flimsy veil with which she has vainly attempted to disguise her views. What but motives of ambition to enlarge her empire could induce her to march her armies into the dominions of the king of Sardinia, to seize on Savoy and Nice, and reunite them as conquered countries in the form of an eighty-fourth department to her own republic. It is pretended indeed that the king of Sardinia was in arms, and leagued with the combined powers of Austria and Prussia against France, and that the armies entered the country in com-

pliance with the will, and earnest intreaties, of an oppressed and injured people. That Sardinia partook of the general alarm in common with the rest of Europe, and felt the necessity of arming in her own defence, is not denied; but who will presume to reprobate a country for endeavouring to guard against invasion? That power had certainly as great a right by the law of nations to increase its standing army in a time of danger, as France herself to embody the national guards, or complete the port of Cherbourg, when all Europe was at peace. The king had declared his neutrality; the entrance of the French army therefore was evidently an act of flagrant injustice, an infringement of the rights of nations, and solely with a view of conquest. The assertion, that the army entered in compliance with the will of the people, and that the change effected in the constitution of the country was not the result of arbitrary power, is too easily refuted by notorious facts. The primary assemblies were convened by a military order, and, so far from having

ving a will of their own, the distressed inhabitants were compelled to chuse a republican form of government; and a foreigner* was sent to the department to be elected its representative, whom the people had never seen, who had never set his foot before on the soil, and who, so far from having any knowledge of the interests of the country, could scarcely speak its language. To the same ambitious motives we are under the necessity of attributing the seizure of Avignon and Venaissin, the dominions of the Pope, the possession of which had been confirmed to his predecessors, as secular princes by the repeated public acts of that very nation, which now unjustly tore them from his hands. What, but a view of adding conquest to conquest, fixed the standard of their new republic in the electorate of Mayence, the bishoprick of Liege, and other provinces of Germany, which they violently dismembered from the empire, and in a part of which they actually established,

* Joel Barlow, an American.

although

although providentially but for a short period, their democratic system, with an intention of erecting it into any eighty-fifth department? Their sole pretext was that those places had afforded an asylum to, and alleviated the accumulating sorrows of the distressed nobility, and clergy, whose property was unjustly confiscated, and who were driven from their native soil to seek protection, and even the common necessities of life, in foreign climes, for daring to profess the virtue of a loyal attachment to their rightful sovereign, and a reverence for the religion of their fathers. Under the specious mask of friendship, and a generous wish to give freedom to a people, whom they artfully represented as oppressed by the galling yoke of tyranny, and groaning under despotism, the French armies marched triumphantly into Brabant; but alas! it was a triumph in which the unfortunate inhabitants had but little share. The city of Brussels, it is true, was illuminated on the arrival of the victorious

Dumourier;

Dumourier; but by the troops quartered in the houses of the frightened and distressed inhabitants. The fallacy of the report, which was so industriously circulated, that the French army was cheerfully received, has been since discovered by the joy, expressed on the return of the Austrians. In Brabant and Flanders likewise primary assemblies were invited to chuse their form of government; but that form was already fixed, and forced on the trembling natives by an army ripe for slaughter. The constitution, which the Belgians so dearly cherished, the *joyeuse entrée*, which they valued as their *magna charta*, and which they had obtained after repeated struggles as much against the intrigues of desperate democracy, as the overt acts of despotism, was torn from them by that very power, which proffered them protection. Every sacred and political institution, which did not correspond with their own wild and ridiculous theories, was forcibly destroyed. “New laws were promulged

mulged with the mouths of their cannon, and enforced with the dagger and the sword *."

During this exertion of a power more arbitrary than Turkish despotism, to complete the whole, the tree of liberty was planted with a farcical solemnity; but, instead of the idol being worshipped, it was found necessary to surround it with troops, to protect it from the fury of the populace.

The language of Chambon in the national convention, declaring that the natural boundaries of France were the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the Ocean, which met with universal applause, sufficiently betrayed their ambitious system: and, had the execution of that system been accomplished, what consequences had we not to dread! In some paroxysm of their phrensy, intoxicated with the success of their barbarous armies, whose return to the capital they dreaded, and which necessity has in a great measure hitherto obliged them to

* Mr. Pitt's Speech.

quarter in the countries, which they had overrun, we might have heard of a decree to make us even the object of their fury, and our now happy and independent island tributary to their new republic. The addition of a district of territory, containing more than three millions of inhabitants, upon the most moderate calculation, to an empire already the largest, and the population of which is greater in proportion to its extent than that of any other nation in Europe, was too serious an event to be viewed with indifference even by the most distant powers. Were it possible even now to conjecture the failure of the present exertions of almost all Europe to check the growth of an evil, pregnant with such important consequences, what have we not to dread! The motions of such a gigantic power, strengthening by exercise, would naturally create an apprehension for the liberties, if not for the existence, not only of this, but of every other nation.

From this view of the general danger, with which the aggrandizement of the French dominions appeared to threaten Europe, it was evidently the height of justice and policy, in the surrounding powers, to make an immediate and vigorous effort to check the evil in its growth.

It was not however general policy alone, which called for our vigilance and activity in so critical a situation of affairs. The consideration of our vicinity to France, and the late attack upon Holland, the fatal effects of which the just interference of this country, by urging the Dutch to action, and co-operating with them, has happily averted, are more powerful than any other motives of political expediency. The danger of an increase of the maritime power of France is of far greater consequence to the interests of Great Britain than any accession to their force by land.

When we survey the map of Europe, and observe the very inconsiderable space occupied by

by this highly favoured island, and reflect on the immensity of its wealth, and its political consequence in the scale of nations, we are naturally surprized at so extraordinary a phenomenon. This surprise, however, vanishes from the mind of a philosophical enquirer, who traces effects to their real causes, and properly estimates the value of the local advantages, so liberally afforded us by nature in the produce, not only of the surface of the soil, which is more than adequate to the wants of our healthy natives, but of the very bowels of the earth, and the convenience of our numerous ports. From these superior advantages, the wisdom of our legislators has not failed to profit. Our ports are crowded with vessels, our manufactures exported to the most distant regions, and, in return for the produce of our labour, we receive every foreign article of convenience, and luxury. To our commerce, which extends from the frigid to the torrid zone, we owe our wealth, our consequence, and every other advantage which we

justly boast of. To our commerce we are indebted for our unrivaled dominion of the seas, and the frequent triumphs of our navy, and so long as we continue to enjoy our present superiority, secured by our fleets, we may brave the insidious or open attacks of every nation under heaven. But, if France had preserved her conquests in the Netherlands, and Holland had become a prey either to her arms, or her intrigues with the anti-stadholderian party, the event would in all human probability have led to a total separation of that power from the interests of Great Britain, the natural consequence of which must have been that France would have acquired the assistance of the fleet of the Dutch republic, and have been enabled by means of the numerous ports which would have then been opened to her, to watch the motions of our fleets, and harraß our commerce with impunity. Her maritime frontier would have extended through the whole sea-line of Flanders, and the United Provinces with an uninterrupted chain of hostile or neutral ports immediately

immediately opposite to the British coast, which in the course of but a few years must inevitably have given her advantages, of which we have always considered it expedient, and have laboured for ages, to deprive her. The French fleet would thus have become too powerful for us to cope with, and Great Britain would not only have been deprived of a strong and natural ally, but that very power might have been employed against us, whose friendship has always been considered of the most essential service, but which, when at war with us, has always proved a most powerful addition to our enemies. Aware of the danger resulting from the increase of the maritime power of France, it was always the policy of this country, till the peace of 1783, to stipulate in our treaties, that Dunkirk, the possession of which has been disputed by our ancestors at the expence of much blood, and treasure, should remain unfortified. The demolition of its fortifications was made an essential article in the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713; in that of
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the Hague in 1717; in that of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748; and in the treaty of Paris in 1763. Notwithstanding this, the French, aware of its importance, and not remarkable for their faithful adherence to treaties, have as often repaired the works towards the sea, as they have been compelled by their enemies to destroy them. It has been considered as an object likewise to prevent the completion of the harbour of Cherbourg. In short, the English have always kept a watch on the improvement of both those places, on account of their particularly convenient situations, knowing that, on the slightest pretence for a dispute, our vessels must be immediately exposed to capture, and our shores to sudden invasion, unless we constantly kept a sufficient fleet in the channel, and were otherwise in a state of preparation to resist the force of so dangerous an enemy. Such being the alarming consequences threatened by the success of France, is it not the duty of patriotic Britons, who regard their national security, and their domestic comforts,

forts, to risk even the calamities of war, to avert the impending evil?

The increasing power of our natural enemies, therefore, was a sufficient cause to justify our armament.—But Englishmen are not merely actuated by principles of policy. We are convinced of the justice of our cause, and feel that we have been insulted as a nation, that the rights of our allies have been infringed, and that we have been called upon to vindicate our national honour, by revenging the injuries we have sustained, and preserving the faith of treaties, which we were pledged to maintain inviolate.

The decree of the national convention on the 19th of November, explained by that of the 15th of December, in which France declared her revolutionary power, and encouraged insurrection in every country, which expressed a wish to change its government, although, in fact, they meant only the adoption of their own

new

new system, was an insult to every nation in Europe, and naturally provoked our indignation. When we saw the deputies from obscure and contemptible societies, not only in London, but in provincial towns, and even villages, received as ambassadors from the British nation, persons, who were condemned by our laws, admitted to the highest honours, and were threatened by an appeal to the opinion of a loyal people, who know no other representative than their rightful sovereign, or those whom he appoints, we could not remain insensible to so gross an insult. The invasion of rights, which England had engaged to guarantee in Brabant, and, above all, their contempt of the stipulations of existing treaties by opening the Scheldt, the exclusive navigation of which the Dutch were justly entitled to, with the consent of other powers, and which Great Britain was bound to secure to them, were injuries which it would have ill become the dignity of a great and independent nation to submit to.

Whether

Whether the waters of a navigable river ought, in the nature of things, to be as common as the other elements to those countries, whose shores they wash, is a question, which has already occupied the talents of a Mirabeau, Linguet, and various other ingenious and celebrated writers; but it requires no depth of argument to prove, that when a nation, entitled by nature to such a privilege, has yielded it by agreement to the advantage of another, that that agreement is sacred. The exclusive right of the Dutch to the navigation of the Scheldt has, ever since they gained their independence, been considered as an object of the first importance, not only to their commercial interests, but to their political existence. When the point was in dispute so long ago as the year 1402, it was determined that the safety and independence of the province of Zealand in particular, rested on the enjoyment of that privilege, of which the French have now attempted to deprive the Republic, and in which, if this country had not taken an active part to

prevent the accomplishment of their designs, they would in all probability have succeeded.

Those, who are acquainted with the situation and other local circumstances, as well as with the history, of the United Provinces, know that the Dutch are indebted to their industry and spirit of commerce, and not to any natural advantages, for their opulence and power, and that the foundation of their greatness is as artificial, as the piles on which the buildings are erected in their cities. Every thing, therefore, which tends to support that surprising fabric, is of the utmost importance, not only to the Dutch themselves, but ultimately to us as their allies.

The advantages, which this country as a maritime and commercial power derives from its alliance with the United Provinces, are too evident to insist upon. Experience has confirmed the wisdom of our ancestors, who first thought so natural a connection essential to our interests; and it is the duty of our ministers, so long as its expediency continues to exist, to secure to this

country every possible advantage it was intended to afford us, of course therefore to resist every attempt which might eventually lessen its validity.

It has been said in parliament, that Great Britain was not called upon to act; that our interference therefore was officious, and that, by involving the Dutch in war, we brought the mischief on ourselves. But when we consider the United Provinces as the weaker power, dreading an invasion, and that an army was already pressing on their borders, famished, and almost naked, urged to action, not only by the enthusiasm of extravagant liberty, but by the want of common necessities, and the hope of plunder, what efficient steps could they have pursued without us? There was no alternative, but submission to an enemy naturally intemperate, and become barbarous by circumstances, or the immediate inundation of their country, a measure which they have never resorted to but in the utmost danger, and which experience

has taught them would retard the cultivation of the soil for a series of years. In such circumstances it would indeed have been very unworthy of Great Britain, and very unlike her usual conduct, to have waited for any solicitation.

I come now to the most important argument in favour of the necessity of the war, because it comes home to the feelings of every individual in this country, who has any rights to value, or comforts to cherish. To prevent the propagation of those pernicious principles, which lead to the violation of the most sacred duties, and the subversion of the peace and good order of civil society; and to preserve inviolate our glorious constitution, at once the pride and boast of Britons, which has been obtained by the struggles of our ancestors, is founded on experience, and has stood the test of ages.

Of the inestimable advantages of such a constitution, France has invidiously attempted to deprive

deprives us. To adopt the language of our minister : “ She viewed with a jealous eye our
 “ happy situation, and the contrast it bore to
 “ the distracted state of her own dominions. She
 “ saw that the wise and happy mixture of a
 “ monarchical government, not founded on base
 “ superstition, but blended with a temperate
 “ aristocracy, and independent democracy, was
 “ superior to any that could possibly arise from
 “ her own visionary projects. She saw with
 “ pain the inviolability of the sovereign, the
 “ operation of the three estates, and the check
 “ of the laws. She saw that she was exempt
 “ from this happiness at home, where the ex-
 “ periments of tyranny, in affecting to establish
 “ liberty, had been productive of ruin and con-
 “ fusion. She saw, with an invidious eye,
 “ the geographical situation of this happy island,
 “ where neither the rigour of the polar frost,
 “ nor scorching beams of the torrid zone,
 “ either checked the fruits of the earth, or ener-
 “ vated her natives. She saw with jealousy,
 “ that the climate was congenial to all the
 “ fruits

“ fruits of a fertile soil, and that she was
 “ equally a stranger to pestilence and famine,
 “ as to the convulsions of an earthquake ! Thus
 “ she found, that we made a splendid contrast
 “ to that unhappy country, which theory,
 “ and impracticable speculations, in a thousand
 “ shapes, has reduced to the lowest ebb of
 “ misery and misfortunes *.”

France saw our happiness, and sickened at
 the view. She was restless till she made an in-
 fidious attempt to undermine it, by promul-
 ging the doctrines to which she was indebted for
 her own misfortunes, and to blast all our
 comforts with the infectious breath of sedition.
 Hence the host of emissaries, and agents, which
 for a length of time infested the streets of the
 metropolis, and who, conscious of the detec-
 tion of their views, suddenly disappeared before
 the operation of the alien bill. Hence the at-
 tempts to debauch our army, the instigation and

* Mr. Pitt's speech, February 1.

encouragement of insurrections, and the misrepresentation of facts in societies established for licentious debate, in coffee-houses, and even in common ale-houses, to seduce those who were vile or weak enough to adopt French principles from their allegiance to the government. Hence the sudden and rapid circulation of their assignats, and the offices, which were established in London to exchange them, to reward the hirelings employed in laying a train for explosion, when the plot was sufficiently matured. Hence the increase of seditious clubs among the lower orders of the people, which, although now shrunk from their purpose, were established, not only in every quarter of London and Edinburgh, and the manufacturing towns of Birmingham, Norwich, Manchester, and Sheffield, but in the obscurest villages, and remotest corners of the island; the sudden and universal panegyrics on republicanism, and abuse of the existing government, the calumnation of its excellent qualities, and exaggeration of its defects, not merely in volumes and pamphlets

phlets, which were delivered gratis, but through the more diffusive channels of daily newspapers, and hand-bills distributed in the most frequented streets, and affixed in the most conspicuous places, to attract the notice of the populace; in short, to diffuse the poison in every shape and form, “to weaken the bands by which
 “the government and people are connected, to
 “diminish the authority of the laws, to re-
 “move the ramparts which are necessary to con-
 “troul the passions of mankind, and to sacri-
 “fice our domestic tranquillity, and national
 “prosperity, for the horrors of intestine broils
 “and civil discord.” Such have been the attempts of vile incendiaries, who aimed at a general conflagration to profit from the spoil, and insinuated that there was something rotten in the state, with the sole intention “to cry
 “havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.”

If these attempts to destroy our happiness, by stabbing at the vitals of our constitution, and promoting an opposition to the existing govern-
 ment,

ment, did not originate with, it is too evident that they were countenanced by our foreign enemies. The language of the French national convention has been a virtual declaration of war against every established government in Europe. The standard of sedition has been erected, every possible temptation has been held out to allure the enemies of peace and good order, and anathemas thundered against all infidels, who should refuse to rally, and support it. If there is not sufficient reason to suspect that emissaries from France were concerned in the riots, which a short time since took place at Shields, at Leith, Yarmouth, Perth, Dundee, and in several other towns, where the pretext was, that they arose merely amongst the sailors, who demanded an increase of wages; facts have been discovered, which warrant the assertion, that disaffected persons have not been wanting, to instigate and foment disturbances, in various parts of the country. The late arrest of a French engineer, and an aid du camp of Dumourier himself, who were found in arms in Ireland,

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are proofs that this assertion is not wholly groundless,

It is no longer a secret from the public, that government has thought it necessary to order some hundred French, who were suspected of villanous intentions, to quit the country at a short notice, since the operation of the alien bill, that the importation of arms has been seasonably prevented, and orders for the manufacture of hostile weapons, apparently designed for the clandestine purposes of French assassins, discovered and stopped before the dreadful plot was ripe for execution. Other circumstances likewise have occurred, which could not fail to alarm every well-wisher to his country. The nocturnal meetings at the house of the late French minister, regularly frequented by notoriously suspected persons, and the visits of an acknowledged principal, although not ostensible, agent of the French republic, to the interior parts of England; the correspondence, likewise, con-

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stantly

stantly kept up, with unconstitutional and seditious societies, in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, and the detection of known assassins, who were found sculking in the obscurest parts of London, are indisputable facts. Amongst these assassins was discovered that infamous wretch Rotondi, who it is said had the audacity to boast, in a public coffee-room, that he had massacred, on the 10th of August, no less a number than twenty of his unhappy countrymen, with the same guilty hand that had been stained with the innocent blood of the accomplished princess de Lamballe. This barefaced villain dared to parade the streets of the metropolis with his accomplices; and yet the advocates for the principles, maintained and propagated by his employers, presume to tell us, that our country was not in danger, and that a war with France is inexpedient and unjust!

Through the constant vigilance, and the wise precautions of the executive power, the dread-

ful storm, which threatened to burst upon our heads, and pour destruction on our happiness, has been most seasonably averted. The gloomy cloud has passed over us, and the danger, which but a short time since we saw ourselves exposed to, has inspired us with a determined zeal, and unanimous resolution to guard in future against the evils, we have so narrowly escaped.

Upon these principles we justify the war we are engaged in: and when we reflect that it is not merely to preserve our national honour or for the sake of conquest; that it is not solely to defend our political consequence in Europe, or that of our allies; but that the interest of every individual is immediately concerned; that it is *pro aris et focis*, for every comfort which we now enjoy, and which we hope to transmit to our children's children, no patriotic Briton can hesitate a single moment to assent to its vigorous prosecution. All that is near and dear to us is at stake, and it is our duty to hazard our lives and fortunes to perpetuate

perpetuate the enjoyment of those blessings on which we set so high a value.

It is evident, from the circumstances already mentioned, that the war with France originated with that power; and that, on the part of England, it is founded on justice, policy, and necessity. It is equally evident, likewise, that the advantages, which we reasonably expect to derive from our success, are not merely the phantoms of imagination, but real, and that the effects produced by them in all probability will be permanent. The preservation of our political existence, as a great and independent nation, and our internal tranquillity, as well as the independence and general welfare of our natural allies; the evacuation of the Austrian Netherlands, which the combined armies have already happily accomplished, the evacuation of the countries contiguous to the Rhine, and the restoration of Savoy and Nice; to reduce the power of the French to certain limits, and to establish some settled form of government, as a security for a lasting peace to Europe, are objects

jects of the first importance, and which certainly demand our utmost exertions to attain.

The probability of those exertions being eventually crowned with success, is certainly much greater than the advocates for France, and French principles, have industriously represented it. Notwithstanding the boasted resources, which Brissot, Kerfaint, and other enthusiastic members of the national convention, whose interest it is to exaggerate, and swell the amount of the number of their troops, and the security for their assignats, have represented as inexhaustible, we shall find on calm enquiry, supposing even the number of their forces to be accurate, and the report of their general military strength to be founded on facts, that in the present state of circumstances we have no reasonable cause to be alarmed. If we may judge from the accumulated distresses which afflict the inhabitants of France at present, no extraordinary spirit of prophecy is requisite to predict an increase of still more horrible calamities to complete their misery.

misery. Allowing a population of five and twenty millions, which is said to have been the most accurate calculation of the number of inhabitants in the French dominions, before the addition of the new departments, their military force must necessarily far exceed the powers of the country. According to the usual calculation of the proportion of males to females, as twelve to thirteen; of children to men of mature age, as three to one; and of the aged and infirm to the hale and strong, who are capable of bearing arms, and of employments of a laborious kind in the dock-yards, various manufactories, and branches of agriculture, as two to one; the number of the latter will only amount to somewhat more than two millions, or a twelfth part of all the inhabitants. Of these according to a decree passed in the national convention, at the commencement of hostilities, five hundred and sixty thousand effective men have been ordered for the land service, and sixty thousand more to equip their navy, so that the total number of able labourers and artificers

remaining cannot exceed fifteen hundred thousand altogether. This number is far from being adequate to the labour required to supply the common necessaries of cloathing and provisions; not to mention the prodigious troops of emigrants, who have sought protection in other countries, those, who are able, but unaccustomed, to work at home, the indolent, who have followed the armies to the frontiers, and even to the scene of action in hostile territories, to share the provision destined for the regular troops, or with the hope of plunder, and the crowds of wretched victims to the inclemency of the season and the fate of war. The natural consequence of this must be the decrease of population, the neglect of agriculture and manufactures, the destruction of commercial credit, a general dissatisfaction among the lower orders of the people, which has already been fatally experienced, and ultimately a want of confidence, if not a revolt in the armies destined to oppose us, a circumstance, which may eventually render them an easy conquest to the veteran and well-disciplined troops of the powers at war with

with them, whom the remembrance of former glories must inspire with courage, and firmness. Another circumstance which must naturally tend to increase our prospect of success, is the dreadful want of provisions, which is said to have prevailed to so great a degree at Paris, and in other populous towns, as almost to have produced a famine; in the former place amongst the lower classes of people, who were totally dependent on the bounty of the nobility, and clergy, maintained in their service, or contributed by their labour to supply their luxuries, and in the latter amongst the manufacturers out of employ.

According to the most authentic accounts of the present state of France, the credit of the trader is destroyed, the looms remain inactive, the vines unpruned, and agriculture in general is almost totally neglected, or entrusted either to the care of the aged, and infirm, or to women and children, who are unequal to the toil; whilst the inefficacy of the executive government, to restrain the abandoned part of

the inhabitants from pillage and wanton massacres, hastens to complete the ruin of that wretched country. We have heard of the immense funds which have been raised to prosecute their military operations, from the sale of the confiscated estates of the clergy and emigrant nobility ; but in the present state of that distracted country, however the prodigious amount of the value of those estates may give an apparent and a plausible security to their assignats, where are purchasers to be met with ? The uncertainty of the tenure, the scarcity of specie, the greatest part of which has been privately transmitted to other countries ; and the late act of parliament, which has passed in this country, to put an end to a speculation so favourable to our enemies, must have considerably reduced their value. All these circumstances must certainly tend to increase the discontent, which has already begun to prevail in several of the departments against the ruling faction, and, if they do not immediately produce a counter-revolution, will probably

bably increase the internal commotions and dissensions, weaken the power of the country in general, and drive the inhabitants to the alternative of submitting to superior force, or of destroying each other by the most dreadful of all calamities, a civil and intestine war.

The unexampled combination of Russia and Spain, acting in concert with the Germanic empire, in its collective capacity, Austria, Prussia, and the maritime powers of England and Holland, will probably render the war of short duration. The decisive victories already gained in Brabant, and on the Rhine, encourage our sanguine hopes, that they are the forerunners of greater triumphs. Our fleet co-operating with that of Spain, and now perhaps of Naples, must necessarily destroy the trade of France in the Mediterranean, and the fortresses of Gibraltar and Ceuta, which command the Straights, prevent any supply of corn, or other provisions, and warlike stores, from any other quarter. A British and Dutch fleet will command the channel, while the

Russians effectually prevent any communication with the Baltic.

It has been repeatedly urged in opposition to the war, that it must inevitably be attended with fatal consequences to the commercial world. That the calamities of war should be the occasion of misfortune to individuals, is certainly much to be lamented; but, upon the most serious and impartial consideration it does not appear that they are likely to be so prejudicial to our mercantile interests as might at first have been reasonably apprehended.

The commercial treaty, concluded with France in the year 1786, has certainly been by no means so favourable to the manufacturers of this country, as has been generally supposed, and for a very obvious reason. When that treaty was concluded, the immediate advantages expected to be derived from it, were so flattering to the speculative trader, that a much greater

greater quantity of articles, the produce of Great Britain, was forced upon the market, than the consumption warranted. The market was over-stocked, and the dealers reduced to the sad alternative of either submitting to a trifling profit, and giving credit for a greater length of time than their capitals would allow, or having the goods returned upon their hands, without the power of disposing of them at the markets of other countries, except at a considerable loss, on account of the expence of carriage, and various other circumstances; so that the cottons of Scotland and Manchester, the cloths of Yorkshire and Devonshire, and many articles of hardware from Sheffield and Birmingham were sold, before the war in France, even at a less price than they could be purchased for in England. Our trade to other countries, on the contrary, and particularly to Germany, and the Baltic, although the quantity of goods exported is certainly far from being equal, is much more lucrative and beneficial, as the prices are considerably higher, and the pay-
ment,

ment, if not immediate, at a very short credit. The war will certainly operate in favour of our trade to Russia, in particular, which has always been considered by the ablest politicians as of the first importance, both with respect to the variety of our manufactures, which are exported, and the useful, and even necessary articles, which we receive in return, to supply the wants of our navy. "It has been considered likewise as essential to our national interest, as it tends to increase the number of our seamen, and as those seas are best calculated to harden, and render them fit for the severest service." The Russians are growing daily more luxurious, and have ever discovered a partiality to trade with England, which, if properly encouraged, must certainly be attended with the most beneficial consequences to our maritime and commercial interests. It is not, however, our trade to Russia and other northern countries alone by which we may reasonably expect to be benefited. The decline of the trade and manufactures of France affords the merchants of this

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country a favourable opportunity of recovering the valuable trade of the Levant. This branch of commerce once so profitable, on account of the demand which it caused for our manufactures, has been for many years of no great importance, the Southern parts of France having availed themselves of the advantages their situation afforded them, to undersel us in all the Turkish ports. The trade of America likewise, of which a considerable share was transferred from this country to Nantz, Havre de Grace, and other ports of France, when the United States acquired their independence, may reasonably be expected to make no inconsiderable addition to our present flourishing revenue.

It must certainly be acknowledged, that, since the commencement of the war, the Gazette has announced an unusual number of failures in the commercial world, which has materially shaken the credit of individuals, a circumstance, of which those who view only the dark side of things, have not failed to take advantage, to calumniate the minister, and repro-

reprobate his measures. If we examine the facts, however, as they really exist, we shall find that many of those, who have lately stopped payment, or actually become bankrupts, and particularly the country bankers, have had little connection with foreign commerce, and that their misfortunes, if such they may be called to the country at large, have been generally the result of speculations, too extensive for their capitals. Excepting a few instances of gentlemen of landed property who have been allured into the fascinating gulph by the prospect of sudden gain, the greater part of them have had no other foundation than the credit of their firms, and so far from their failures being a matter of surprise to the steady and substantial traders, it is only to be attributed to the peculiar circumstances of the times, that they should have been able to support themselves so long.

The failure of some of these houses naturally created a general alarm. The sudden panic, which

which universally prevailed, prevented an inquiry into the security of the bills in circulation, the inevitable consequence of which was, that a larger quantity of them was ~~issued~~ poured even into the well-established banks, than their funds were immediately equal to, and this increased the demand of specie to so great a degree, that some of the most wealthy houses, which are known to be possessed of property to an immense amount, were unable to raise an adequate supply, and trembled with the general shock.

After all, perhaps, the failure of the country banks in general, so far from proving an actual evil, although many innocent individuals may be sufferers, will ultimately be found to be a real national advantage. The plan lately adopted by the Bank of England, of issuing notes for smaller sums will certainly supply their convenience to the farmers and inferior tradesmen, to whom the country banks were chiefly an advantage ; and the credit of the opu-

lent merchants will be materially sustained, as well as confidence restored by the aid of the exchequer bills.

What this country may eventually gain by the war, besides the general advantage in which all Europe must participate, it is impossible precisely to determine. Circumstances have hitherto occurred so contrary to the general expectation, that it is scarcely possible to hazard a conjecture on the subject. Reasoning, however, from favourable appearances, and the success, which has hitherto attended the measures adopted, we may venture to predict that our object will soon be happily accomplished. It is possible also that our expences may be reimbursed by the acquisition of the French possessions, not only in the East-Indies, which must inevitably fall an easy prey to us; but of the West-India islands themselves, which are certainly already in a state of revolt, and it is said have solicited the protection of Great Britain against the new republic. The island of Corsica in the Mé-

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diterranean, would be a conquest attended with little hazard, and by supplying us with a port in that sea, be an object of great importance to us.

Various other advantages might easily be mentioned, which may contribute in a considerable degree to counterbalance whatever losses, even a long and expensive war might expose us to. But whether this were the case or not, we are sensible that the cause we are engaged in is of such importance, that every good citizen will chearfully consent to sacrifice his private and temporary interest, however great, in its support. We are convinced, that a war with France is the only measure by which we can secure the preservation of our liberties, our property, and every advantage we enjoy, which is a sufficient inducement to prosecute it with unanimity and vigour.

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